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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST)

OVERVIEW

Shortly after the fall of the Taliban, the Afghan government began rebuilding its educational system. Relatively few of the 160,000 primary and secondary school educators employed by the government possessed the formal education or skills required by Ministry of Education (MoE). Yet, improving the quality of instruction is critical to strengthening education in Afghanistan. The quality of instruction directly and often dramatically impacts the overall quality of basic education as it fundamentally shapes children's opportunities for success.

Working in close partnership with the MoE, USAID's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project developed an in-service training delivery system for teachers and is providing technical assistance to teacher support systems of the MoE. BESST operates in Balkh, Daykundi, Ghazni, Hirat, Kandahar, Khost, Jawzjan, Nangarhar, Panjsher, Sari Pul, and Wardak provinces to build the teaching capacity of 51,000 educators. The BEEST project will be completed in August 2011. However, follow-on activities will be continued via on-budget, direct assistance (with MoE) or via off-budget technical capacity building mechanisms.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- Prepare the MoE to take over and manage a district-based in-service training delivery system involving a multi-tiered training cascade to support MoE teachers in the areas where they work and live
- Broadcast educational radio programs and educational video programs for teachers
- Enhance school principals' knowledge and school management skills through administrative and supervisory training programs
- Support a team of MoE curriculum experts in developing teacher and school manager competencies, creating competency-based test items, and administering pilot competency tests
- Provide technical assistance to MoE in developing its organizational chart, designing and upgrading the Human Resource (HR) database, creating HR policies, standardizing job descriptions, and developing HR training manuals
- Transition the MoE to take over and sustain BESST activities

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed MoE's first in-service teacher training on general teaching methodology for more than 52,000 teachers, of whom 63 percent met minimum MoE performance levels
- Trained approximately 36,000 teachers in teaching methodologies specific to grades 1-3
- Produced and broadcasted more than 560 educational radio programs for teachers across the country and 40 educational video programs for teachers in eight provinces
- Delivered school management training to 3,500 principals, of whom 58 percent met/surpassed minimum performance levels
- Designed a comprehensive framework of teacher and school manager competencies to facilitate the MoE's administration of national teacher competency tests in 2009
- Enhanced management capacity of MoE by improving HR policies and implementing standardized procedures
- Enhanced community involvement through school improvement councils leading to stronger local support for secure and stable learning environments for children